

displays. Similar to the roulette wheel described above, a center of the distance between the layered displays may be set as the center of the wheel for the Wheel of Fortune® game. In one example, dollar values can move between the layered displays towards and away from a player. The actual position on the Wheel of Fortune® that the pointer stops on may be highlighted or emphasized by the other of the layered displays to enhance visual appeal. Letters for the word or phrase being solved may jump back and forth from the front and distal displays. The letters may even turn over using 3-D effects between the layered displays. In one specific embodiment, the characters in the game show can be displayed on the front display panel or screen while the word or phrase being solved appears on the back panel. In another specific embodiment, the Wheel of Fortune® wheel can appear on the front display screen while the word or phrase being solved appears on the back panel. It will be readily appreciated that a wide variety of other Wheel of Fortune® arrangements are suitable for use with multi-layered displays.

[0087] Turning now to FIG. 5A a simulated display of an exemplary virtual gaming wheel for use in a processor-based gaming machine having a multi-layer display is illustrated in side perspective view. As shown, gaming wheel 190 spins about a central axis 191 such that any of a number of wheel stops 192 can come to rest at one or more pointers or indicators 193 when the wheel stops spinning. The visible face of gaming wheel 190 is partially raised into a conical shape, such that a raised center portion 194 is created. Center portion 194 may or may not include center wheel stops (not shown) for the play of a suitable wheel based game. In the event that no wheel stops are used on raised center portion 194, then a logo or other design may be used instead. Although the visible face of gaming wheel 190 is partially raised, it will be readily appreciated that gaming wheels with substantially flat faces or other suitable shapes may also be used.

[0088] A particular pointer 193a can be indicated for a player viewing the gaming wheel 190 at the angle presented. As shown, pointer 193a for the subject player indicates that a wheel stop having a value of “150” is the current wheel spin outcome. Other pointers 193 may apply for other players, and it will be readily appreciated that multiple players may play a game involving wheel 190 simultaneously. In addition, although gaming wheel 190 is shown as spinning in a counterclockwise direction, alternative gaming wheels that spin in the opposite direction may also be used.

[0089] As noted above, gaming wheel 190 may be presented on multiple screens of a single multi-layer display device. For example, the portion of gaming wheel bounded by broken line 195 can be displayed on a front display screen, while the remainder of the gaming wheel can be displayed on a back display screen of a multi-layer display. In this manner, the back part of raised center portion 194 and the back wheel stops having values of “60” and “30” can all be presented on a back display screen, and the remaining front portion of the wheel can appear to “jump out” at the player by residing on a front display screen. As the wheel spins, the “60” value wheel stop would then jump from the back to the front screen, while the “1000” value wheel stop would jump from the front to the back screen.

[0090] FIG. 5B illustrates the exemplary virtual gaming wheel of FIG. 5A in top plan view, while FIG. 5C illustrates the same exemplary virtual gaming wheel in side elevation view. It will be appreciated that many of the various wheel stop values have not been provided in this figures, so as not to

unduly clutter that which is being shown. Although it is thought that the view shown in FIG. 5A is a superior view for purposes of game play, various embodiments of the present invention allow a player to select which view of gaming wheel 190 is shown for game play.

[0091] FIG. 5D illustrates a simulated combination display in side perspective and top plan views of the exemplary virtual gaming wheel of FIG. 5A. Such a combination display 126 might also be provided as a player selection, as in the views of FIGS. 5B and 5C. As shown in FIG. 5D, a side perspective view may dominate the display screen, with an inset portion 136 being used to provide an alternative view of the gaming wheel 190—in this case a top plan view. Again, the player may be allowed to choose which view is shown as the dominant screen view of display 126 and which view is shown in the inset portion 136.

[0092] In various embodiments gaming wheel 190 may be a graphical creation, as in the case of a purely virtual wheel. In further embodiments, gaming wheel 190 may be a video or visual depiction of an actual physical gaming wheel, such as, for example, an actual roulette wheel or Wheel of Fortune® wheel. In such instances, one or more cameras (not shown) may be used to capture images and/or video of the actual physical wheel or wheels, which may be remotely located from the gaming machine. Such captured images and/or video clips can then be transmitted to the gaming machine and shown on display 126 to present the subject physical wheel.

[0093] In the event that multiple cameras are used, a first camera can be used to focus on and capture a back or rear region of the subject gaming wheel, which a second camera can be used to focus on and capture a front region of the gaming wheel. These two separate images, feeds or clips can then be appropriately provided for display on the front and back screens of an associated multi-layer display on the gaming machine. In some embodiments, recorded clips can be made of the actual gaming wheel, and such clips can then be played back as appropriate during game play at the gaming machine. In other embodiments, one or more live video feeds of the actual gaming wheel may be provided for display at the multi-layer display. In either situation, the subject gaming machine can be used as part of a multi-player station system that may be associated with an actual physical gaming wheel.

[0094] In the event that more than one gaming wheel is presented, such a plurality of gaming wheels may be used in combination to present a game and/or game outcome. Continuing now to FIG. 6A, a simulated display of one exemplary set of concentric virtual gaming wheels adapted for the play of an associated game according to one embodiment of the present invention is shown in top plan view. Combined gaming wheel 290 includes an outer gaming wheel 296 and inner gaming wheel 294 arranged in concentric fashion with respect to each other. Similar to foregoing embodiments, outer wheel 296 includes a plurality of wheel stops. Inner wheel 294 can also be seen to include a plurality of smaller wheel stops.

[0095] As shown, outer wheel can rotate clockwise, while inner wheel can rotate counterclockwise during an associated game play. An indicator or pointer 293a can be used to designate the appropriate wheel stop or aligned payline when one or both wheels stop during or after game play. Although pointer 293a points to a single wheel stop on outer wheel 296, an extended broken line also indicates where a payline through multiple wheel stops on both inner and outer wheels may be created. It will also be appreciated that various com-